

**Security Council**

Sixty-second year

*Provisional***5777**th meetingTuesday, 13 November 2007, 3 p.m.
New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Natalegawa	(Indonesia)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	Congo	Mr. Okio
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Ghana	Mr. Christian
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Peru	Mr. Voto-Bernales
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Qahtani
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Khalilzad

Agenda

The situation in Myanmar

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Myanmar

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Japan, Myanmar and Singapore, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Swe (Myanmar) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Takasu (Japan) and Mr. Menon (Singapore) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Gambari: I am grateful for this opportunity to brief the Security Council soon after my most recent visit to Myanmar, from 3 to 8 November, which was undertaken on behalf of the Secretary-General in the context of his good offices mandate.

At the outset, I wish to thank the Government of Myanmar for having brought forward my visit to the first week of November. As members of the Council know, this mission followed closely my visit at the

height of the recent crisis in late September to early October. The main focus of my mission was thus to follow up on and facilitate, where possible, the implementation of immediate and medium- to long-term recommendations made during my previous visit to address the serious concerns arising from the crisis.

As was the case last time, the authorities organized my programme in such a way that most of my meetings were held in Nay Pyi Taw, the new capital, except for the afternoon of the last day, which was spent in Yangon. Although it was not possible this time to meet with Senior General Than Shwe, arrangements were made for me to meet with the new Prime Minister, General Thein Sein, with whom I left a letter from the Secretary-General, which was addressed to the Senior General. In addition to the Prime Minister, I met with all the relevant members of the Government, including the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Information, Culture and Labour, both as members of the Authoritative Team of the State Peace and Development Council and as members of the newly established Constitutional Drafting Committee. I also held separate meetings with the Minister of Labour in his capacity as the newly appointed Minister for Relations with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, as well as with the Foreign Minister, the Planning Minister and the Minister for Religious Affairs.

I met also with the new Secretary-I of the State Peace and Development Council, Lieutenant General Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo. Although I regret that it was not possible to meet with all the interlocutors that I requested to meet, such as representatives of the 88 Generation Students, Members of Parliament elected in 1990, monks and detainees, the Government organized for me to meet with civil society groups, including the Union Solidarity and Development Association, the Women's Federation of Myanmar, the Myanmar Chamber of Commerce and the National Red Cross Society, as well as with political parties, including the National League for Democracy (NLD), the National Union Party and the National Pao' People Party. The Government also invited the diplomatic corps to meet me in Nay Pyi Taw. In Yangon, I was received by the Sayadaws of the State Sangha Maha Committee, and I was able to meet with the United Nations country team, on United Nations premises, as well as with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi herself.

As members of the Council are aware, my visit to Myanmar followed a statement from the President of

the General Assembly on 5 October and the adoption of a Security Council presidential statement on 11 October (S/PRST/2007/37), both of which expressed strong support for the Secretary-General's good offices role and for my own efforts on his behalf, and called on the Government of Myanmar to continue to cooperate with the United Nations.

It is also important to remind ourselves of the initial positive steps taken by the Government since my last visit. At our suggestion, the Government already lifted the curfews put in place during the demonstrations, withdrew all visible military presence from the streets, and, by its own account, released over 2,700 persons detained in the course of the demonstrations, including some 700 monks, as well as political detainees, including prominent activists and some 50 members of the NLD, Aung San Suu Kyi's party. Importantly, the Government appointed on 8 October Labour Minister Major-General Aung Kyi as Minister for Relations with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and a first meeting between them took place on 25 October. The Government also appointed a 54-member Constitutional Drafting Committee that has yet to be convened as a whole. Finally, the Government agreed to receive the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Situation in Myanmar, Mr. Paolo Pinheiro, who is currently in the country, and the Government also agreed in principle to receive a delegation from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

At the same time, however, serious concerns remain about ongoing reports of human rights abuses and about whether the Government is willing to move forward in an expeditious manner in a new direction. I am therefore pleased that I was able to have frank and extensive discussions with all of my counterparts on Myanmar's efforts to meet international concerns and expectations in the wake of the recent demonstrations. One of those discussions actually took place and was broadcast live on the national television.

On the downside, the Government has yet to provide assurances that it will lift the restrictions on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. I have stressed to the Government that the best way to make real their commitment to dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is to release her without delay, so that she can become a full partner in the dialogue that we all envisage.

A date has yet to be announced for the commencement of the substantive dialogue. It is important to note, however, that the parties are still in the initial stage of discussions, which include consultations between Aung San Suu Kyi and the Central Executive Committee of her National League for Democracy party, which, again, took place last week.

Finally, the Government has yet to provide an indication of the proposed timeframe for the next steps in its political road map following the completion of the National Convention on 3 September. While the Government has assured me that it intends to proceed with the drafting of a constitution and the holding of a referendum and elections, I stressed that the more clarity there is about the timing of those steps, the more credible the process will be.

Although my mission did not produce all the results that I had hoped for, I am in a position to report a number of positive outcomes, which I would like to highlight here. For the first time since she was last put under house arrest in May 2003, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was allowed on 8 November to pronounce herself publicly, through me, on her commitment in the interest of the nation to work with the Government through meaningful and time-bound dialogue, and on the role of the United Nations in that regard. Secondly, immediately following her statement on 9 November, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was allowed for the first time in four years to meet with the Central Executive Committee of the her NLD party and, for the second time, with the Minister for Relations, Aung Kyi.

Thirdly, the Prime Minister reiterated his Government's full confidence in and support for the Secretary-General's good offices and invited me to return to Myanmar — in his words, "again and again and again" — including to meet with the Constitutional Drafting Committee, once it is convened, to discuss ways of broadening the constitutional process. The Government also agreed in principle to the establishment of a small liaison capacity in Yangon in support of the good offices mission.

Fourthly, the Government further assured me that it will release more detainees and that no more arrests will be carried out. In that connection, it has agreed in principle to allow access to detainees by the ICRC. In the meantime, it has also agreed to an early visit by Special Rapporteur Pinheiro who — as I mentioned

earlier — is currently in Myanmar, after four years of being denied access to the country. Fifthly, the Government further agreed in principle to consider the possibility of establishing a broad-based poverty alleviation commission. While stressing the need to respect its sovereignty in all matters, the Government signalled its openness to studying a concept paper for the proposed commission, and we are preparing such a policy paper.

Finally, an agreement was reached on an interim arrangement for the United Nations Country Team in Myanmar. In response to the Government's announcement the day before my visit that it would not want the current United Nations Resident Coordinator for Myanmar, Mr. Charles Petrie, to continue his services beyond his current term, the Secretary-General made clear his disappointment at the Government's decision and expressed his full confidence in the work of the United Nations Country Team and its leadership, which I also conveyed directly to the authorities. The Government has, however, agreed that as of 5 December, an Acting Resident Coordinator would take over pending the appointment of a new Resident Coordinator. The Planning Minister also reaffirmed the Government's policy of full cooperation with the United Nations Country Team.

I would also like to report some of the views and concerns expressed by the Government. In the course of my discussions, I was again assured that the recent demonstrations were instigated by a minority of elements opposed to the Government and supported largely from outside, that the demonstrations were limited to Yangon and Mandalay while the rest of the country had remained calm and that the Government's seven-step road map, including the National Convention, enjoyed the support of the majority of the people of Myanmar as demonstrated in popular rallies held around the country. In that regard, I was assured that, while some opposition groups did not participate in the National Convention, the constitutional referendum and elections would provide such groups with the opportunity to express their views.

The Government also considers that, while Myanmar is expected to meet international demands and concerns, Myanmar also expects the international community to recognize positive steps it may be taking in terms of cooperating with the United Nations. It was explained to me, for example, that Security Council action and punitive measures adopted by some Member

States vis-à-vis Myanmar run contrary to the Government's expectations in that regard.

At the request of the Secretary-General, my visit to Myanmar was preceded by a new round of consultations in key regional capitals from 15 to 27 October, ahead of the upcoming Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and East Asia Summits from 19 to 21 November. I would like to share some of the main conclusions that emerged from the high-level consultations I had with leaders in China, Japan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, prior to visiting Myanmar. First, all the countries I visited expressed strong support for the Secretary-General's good offices process and pledged to translate such support by actively encouraging the leadership in Myanmar to continue to cooperate concretely with the United Nations so that the good offices role would produce tangible results. Secondly, all of the countries I visited support the United Nations good offices as the central track for the international community's approach to Myanmar and stress the need for any regional or other initiatives to be in support of the United Nations good offices role.

Thirdly, while all the countries I visited consider that sanctions against Myanmar are counterproductive, they accept that the international community should mobilize to help address Myanmar's humanitarian and socio-economic problems, commensurate with actual progress in the areas of concern to the international community.

On balance, the positive outcomes of this latest mission show that the Government of Myanmar, while stressing its sovereignty and independence, can be responsive to the concerns of the international community. Although high expectations continue to be borne out of the recent crisis, the situation today is qualitatively different from what it was a few weeks ago. Based on specific recommendations made through the Secretary-General's good offices, a process is now in motion that will hopefully lead to a substantive dialogue with concrete outcomes within an agreed timeframe between the leadership of Myanmar's State Peace and Development Council and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. In order to succeed, such a dialogue would require flexibility on all sides, but I am convinced that it is the only way forward for Myanmar. Sustained engagement by the United Nations through its good offices, with the support of the international community, will be needed in order to ensure that the

process of dialogue that has been initiated will not be reversed. But we are far from the point of the irreversibility of this process at this time. And that is why it is important for the international community to carefully consider the concerns of the Government but to also listen to the views of Aung San Suu Kyi and other relevant parties now that they are able to speak for themselves.

From the perspective of the United Nations, it is clear from the recent events in Myanmar and from my latest consultations that the principles guiding our good offices role have become even more relevant as we move forward, and permit me, Sir, to reaffirm them here. First, the good offices role of the Secretary-General is not an event, but a process that will require time, patience and persistence. Secondly, given the complexity of the situation, the good offices cannot be a one-issue process — however important an issue may be — but rather needs to follow a comprehensive approach to address the multidimensional challenges facing Myanmar. Thirdly, the good offices process is not, however, an end by itself. It must yield tangible results and build on progress made each time there are missions to Myanmar. Fourthly, all those who can help, both inside and outside Myanmar, need to be encouraged to contribute to a solution to Myanmar's challenges. In this regard, the United Nations is grateful for the support of the domestic political forces in Myanmar, as well as the continued support of ASEAN and Myanmar's neighbours.

The Secretary-General has also made clear that a return to the status quo that existed before the crisis would be both unacceptable and unsustainable. In today's world, no country can afford to stay outside the irreversible trend towards stability, prosperity and democracy. It is the responsibility of every Government — including Myanmar's — to listen to its own people, to respond to legitimate popular demand and to respect in full the human rights of its citizens.

In the case of Myanmar, that implies starting without delay a dialogue between the Government and the opposition as a necessary part of any national reconciliation process, and addressing the humanitarian and socio-economic factors that underlie popular grievances.

The United Nations, meanwhile, is fully committed to working with the Government and the people of Myanmar to build on the current positive

momentum in order to move Myanmar closer to the shared goals of national reconciliation, democracy, prosperity and full respect for human rights.

The President: I thank Mr. Gambari for his briefing. The floor is now open for those members who wish to speak.

Sir John Sawers (United Kingdom): I would like to begin by expressing my deep appreciation to Mr. Gambari for his briefing, and in particular for his efforts to broker a process of national reconciliation in Burma. His hard work and his tireless travel in the Asia region have helped to maintain high-level international engagement, which will be vital to bringing about real progress inside Burma.

His latest visit to Burma was clearly not easy. As he was confined for most of the time to Nay Pyi Taw, unable to choose who he would see and denied access to the Senior General, the approach of the Burmese authorities was not in line with the expectation of the Security Council, as set out in our presidential statement of 11 October (S/PRST/2007/37). We are also concerned at the effective expulsion of the head of the United Nations country team on the eve of Mr. Gambari's visit.

The biggest step forward came following Mr. Gambari's meeting with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. We welcome the statement that Mr. Gambari delivered on her behalf, in particular her commitment to pursue the path of dialogue constructively and her invitation to the Government and all relevant parties to join her in that spirit.

Now it is the turn of the regime in Burma to reciprocate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's readiness to cooperate. Initial meetings between her and the Government liaison officer and meetings with her party leadership are important, but are only first steps. We support Mr. Gambari's call on the authorities to unconditionally release Aung San Suu Kyi. The regime must remove the restraints on her access to her party and allow other opposition leaders, ethnic minority leaders and other stakeholders to meet with Aung San Suu Kyi and with one another freely and without impediment in order to ensure a genuine, inclusive and meaningful dialogue. We share Aung San Suu Kyi's view that the dialogue should be time bound, not least so that we can measure the results.

We welcome Special Rapporteur Pinheiro's current visit. We remain very concerned about the fate of those who participated in peaceful demonstrations in September and about the ongoing arrests and long sentences issued. It is important that we do not lose sight of the continuing arrests taking place. I understand that Suu Suu Nway, who has campaigned bravely and resolutely to rid Burma of forced labour, has recently been arrested by the authorities, a move that raises a question mark over the regime's commitment to Mr. Gambari to make no further such arrests.

We believe that Mr. Pinheiro should be allowed to address fully all these concerns and we look forward to his report to the Human Rights Council.

We would welcome Mr. Gambari's early return to Burma, and for him to be able to pay repeat visits on an unrestricted basis, as indicated to him by the Prime Minister of Burma. It is important that he be given freedom of movement and access to facilitate the process of reconciliation, not only with those he saw this time but also representatives of other civil society groups such as the 88 Generation students, the ethnic minorities, the monks and those still detained. Moves by the Burmese authorities to control Mr. Gambari's activities raise questions about their sincerity in engaging with the good offices mission.

The solution to Burma's problems will remain one for all Burma's people to find, with assistance from the United Nations and the international community. We, the international community, will need to continue to pressure and persuade the regime to make progress. The small steps forward described by Mr. Gambari today are welcome and could be the beginning of a process that achieves peace, prosperity and stability.

But they could also be a false dawn. Previous meetings and discussions failed to yield the results needed, so it is important that in pursuing the present opportunity, we stay united and focused on this issue to bring about the changes we all want to see.

Mr. Burian (Slovakia): I too would like to thank Mr. Gambari for his briefing and for his continuing diplomatic efforts in Burma/Myanmar to promote and encourage the process of national reconciliation and democratization in that country. Slovakia strongly supports his activities carried out within the framework of the good offices mission of the Secretary-General.

We note Mr. Gambari's observation about certain progress reached in the talks with the Myanmar leadership, which we hope will lead to a meaningful, substantive and time bound dialogue aimed at reform, national reconciliation, democracy and full respect for human rights in Burma. We join the Secretary-General's call on the parties to redouble their efforts towards that end. We believe that the military leaders of Burma/Myanmar bear particular responsibility for creating appropriate conditions for the dialogue.

In this regard, we remain concerned about the continued violence used by the military leadership against political opponents, including crackdowns on peaceful demonstrations, arbitrary arrests and other gross violations of human rights in Burma/Myanmar. We are particularly concerned about the reports of forcible recruitment of children and their deployment in military actions by the Burmese army.

We welcome the return to Burma/Myanmar of Special Rapporteur Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, in the context of the mandate entrusted to him by the Human Rights Council, and we hope that the Council will also be briefed about the observations from this visit as soon as possible.

In that context, my delegation reaffirms its call on the regime of Myanmar to immediately stop the human rights violations and address the concerns of the international community, including through the immediate release of political prisoners. We believe that it is high time for the Government to embark on a credible and fully participatory reform process leading to a genuine democratic transition and national reconciliation in order to avoid further loss of human life and escalation of tensions with dire consequences not only for Burma/Myanmar but for the entire region.

We welcome the engagement of countries of the region with Burma/Myanmar in support of the Secretary-General's good offices and their positive pressure and influence on the Myanmar regime towards changing its unacceptable policies and starting a genuine process of democratization and national reconciliation. We believe this engagement must also be redoubled to achieve further and irreversible progress towards democracy in Burma/Myanmar.

Finally, we also believe that the continued active role of the Security Council is indispensable if the current efforts are to bring further results.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): We too thank Mr. Gambari for his comprehensive briefing on his recent visit to Myanmar. His efforts on behalf of the good offices of the Secretary-General bear witness to the international community's commitment to, and unwavering support for, peace and stability in Myanmar. South Africa fully supported the Secretary-General's decision to send his Special Envoy, Mr. Gambari, to visit Myanmar for the second time in three months. We also wish to express our thanks to the Government of Myanmar for having allowed the Special Envoy to visit the country in fulfilment of his mandate.

South Africa welcomes recent developments in Myanmar that saw talks between opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and representatives of the Government. We further note with satisfaction that, for the first time in four years, Aung San Suu Kyi was able to meet with her fellow Central Committee leaders of the National League for Democracy. My delegation is optimistic that those positive steps will have a significant impact in bringing about much-needed political progress in Myanmar. The lifting of the curfew and the release of the detainees and even of some of the political prisoners, as mentioned by Professor Gambari, are proof to us that we are now in a new situation of progress in Myanmar. My delegation believes that only negotiations among all parties will lead to a resolution of the country's challenges. We wish to encourage all parties in Myanmar to remain committed to finding a long-term and lasting solution to the challenges facing their country.

South Africa welcomes the decision by the Government of Myanmar to allow Professor Paolo Sergio Pinheiro, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, to also visit Myanmar. We encourage the Government to continue to provide Mr. Pinheiro with all the cooperation necessary for the fulfilment of his mandate from the Human Rights Council.

South Africa continues to support the efforts by the international community, including the Secretary-General's good offices and Special Envoy Gambari's tireless efforts, to facilitate dialogue in Myanmar that will bring about a resolution of the country's challenges. We further commend the continuing role played by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its neighbouring countries in supporting Mr. Gambari's efforts and in assisting all the parties in

Myanmar to resolve the challenges facing their country. We note that the forthcoming ASEAN Summit, to be held on 20 November 2007, will discuss the situation in Myanmar as part of its agenda. In that regard, South Africa stands ready to support the efforts of that regional body.

In conclusion, we urge the entire international community, in particular the Security Council, to rally behind the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy, Mr. Gambari, as well as Myanmar's neighbours, as they continue in their endeavours aimed at bringing about lasting peace in Myanmar.

Mr. Khalilzad (United States of America): The United States deeply appreciates the efforts of Special Envoy Gambari and his team and welcomes his report to the Security Council. We have carefully tracked Mr. Gambari's efforts since we last met to fulfil the objectives unanimously laid down by this Council in our presidential statement of 11 October (S/PRST/2007/37), principally our call upon the Burmese regime

"to create the necessary conditions for a genuine dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all concerned parties and ethnic groups in order to achieve an inclusive national reconciliation with the direct support of the United Nations".

In that regard, the United States particularly welcomes the statement by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi that was released by Mr. Gambari on 8 November. We fully support her willingness to engage in what she described as "a meaningful and time-bound dialogue with the SPDC (State Peace and Development Council)" and underscore her expectation that such a dialogue should begin as early as possible. We are heartened by that message, and by the decision of the military regime to permit Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to communicate her views to the Special Envoy.

But those steps, however welcome, are not enough and do not yet constitute a fundamental shift. We believe that the Security Council, like Burma's neighbours and the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), must sustain its engagement and make clear the regime's outstanding obligations with respect to progress in the areas of concern to the international community.

First, the regime should fulfil its obligation to this body and begin a substantive national dialogue as early as possible, with no preconditions. In a

12 November statement, the Secretary-General stated that a process has been launched that will hopefully lead to a meaningful and substantive dialogue with concrete outcomes within an agreed time frame. Although the regime has permitted a Government liaison to meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, to date that process is merely — in her words — preliminary consultations and does not yet constitute a dialogue. In addition, the SPDC announced through the State media on 6 November that tripartite talks involving the SPDC, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Mr. Gambari would be premature.

We believe, however, that the United Nations role could facilitate dialogue and would ensure that any dialogue is credible. That is why the Security Council and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi herself have welcomed the good-offices role of the United Nations. Whatever form the dialogue may take, inclusive talks are long overdue and have been called for repeatedly by Burma's neighbours, by the broader international community and, most recently, by this Council.

Secondly, there should be a stop to the ongoing arrests and detentions and an immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners and detainees, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. If General Than Shwe and other members of the SPDC are committed to cooperation with the United Nations, as they have stated, then they should release all political prisoners and detainees. Moreover, they should put a stop to the ongoing arrests and detentions of democracy activists. As was mentioned by my colleague from the United Kingdom just this past week, key activists such as Su Su Nway and U Gambira and members of the All-Burma Monks Alliance were arrested.

Thirdly, it is critical that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi be free to consult broadly so that she can engage in meaningful dialogue with the SPDC. In her statement, she announced that it is her duty to consider "the interests and opinions of as broad a range of political organizations and forces as possible", including Burma's ethnic minorities. It is unreasonable to expect that she will be able to engage in a meaningful dialogue with the Burmese generals and all concerned political parties and ethnic groups while she is under house arrest and her movements and consultations are tightly controlled. While the United States is pleased that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was finally permitted to meet with her fellow members of the National League

for Democracy on 9 November, we believe that that positive development must be both extended and expanded.

Fourthly, the Burmese regime needs to allow Mr. Gambari to control his own itinerary and to meet with any individual group he deems relevant to his efforts. While we welcome the prospect of future and regular visits by Mr. Gambari to Burma, the regime must meet the demands of the Council and cooperate fully with them in order for his engagement to bear fruit. We define full cooperation as unrestricted access to all persons and parties in Burma. General Than Shwe's decision not to meet with Mr. Gambari on this most recent trip, as he has in the past, indicates a troubling lack of commitment on the part of the SPDC to working with the United Nations to promote the process of dialogue and national reconciliation. Another troubling indicator was the fact that the regime, not Mr. Gambari, arranged his meetings and dictated his schedule.

Our expectations are clear: the military regime's so-called road map to democracy, which excludes Burma's democratic and ethnic minority groups from meaningful participation, is demonstrably inadequate. A legitimate transition to democracy will require a process that is shaped by, includes and is supported by all of the people of Burma.

We acknowledge and appreciate the role of those countries in the region with influence over Burma, particularly its immediate neighbours and countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and call on them to reinvigorate their efforts to persuade Burma's ruling generals to accelerate steps to begin the inclusive dialogue on the peaceful transition to democracy that Aung San Suu Kyi and the Burmese people seek and that the United Nations is prepared to facilitate.

The United States fully supports the good offices mission and believes that this mechanism can facilitate the outcome that we all seek: a peaceful transition to a representative and responsible government in Burma. We greatly appreciate the role undertaken by Special Adviser Gambari, and fully support his efforts to sustain, consolidate and expand the modest progress made so far and the process that is under way now. The Secretary-General is clearly committed to the process, as is Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. We look to the Secretary-General and his team to build the capacity required for

the Special Adviser to successfully engage with the parties on a sustained basis.

We echo the Secretary-General's statement that all relevant parties must redouble their efforts towards achieving national reconciliation, democracy and full respect for human rights. It is now time for General Than Shwe and the SPDC to demonstrate that they are equally committed to transition and national reconciliation by releasing Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners and heeding her call to begin a meaningful and time bound dialogue. We also believe that the SPDC should avail itself of the United Nations good offices mission.

Through the efforts of the Special Adviser, the international community has offered the ruling generals a constructive means of engagement. In our view, it should be clear that in order to retain the support of the international community, this engagement must gain momentum and show real resolve. A process for process's sake will not be acceptable. The United States will continue to closely monitor events in Burma. We believe the Security Council should continue to balance engagement with appropriate pressure and calibrate both levels according to progress on the ground.

Mr. Verbeke (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to thank the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, Mr. Gambari, for his comprehensive briefing on his visit, and we reiterate our full support for his good offices. My delegation is encouraged by the positive tone of the message of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, which confirms — as if confirmation were still needed — that she is ready for dialogue. We now await a gesture in the same direction from the Burmese authorities.

The recent meetings of Aung San Suu Kyi with the Minister of Labour, Aung Kyi, and her meeting with the Central Executive Committee of her party are developments in the right direction. The freeing of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is, however, indispensable in order to enable her to fully play the important role which falls to her as part of genuine political dialogue.

My delegation has noted with interest in the statement of the Permanent Representative of Myanmar in New York that "Relations with the United Nations are the cornerstone of the foreign policy of our country". In this context, my delegation invites the United Nations authorities to translate that

commitment into concrete action. Meeting with Mr. Gambari and initiating contacts with Aung San Suu Kyi are positive actions in terms of process, but that process must lead to some results. The majority of the demands included in the presidential statement of 11 October (S/PRST/2007/37) still remain to be met.

Belgium remains particularly concerned about the fate of the political prisoners and about the fact that several hundred demonstrators from August and September are still being held in detention. They must be freed without delay.

International mobilization must continue. In this context, all eyes will be on Singapore, where in the coming days we will see the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit, followed by the East Asia Summit, then by the ASEAN-European Union Commemorative Summit. All countries of the region agree that a return to the status quo ante is not an option. It is essential that the Myanmar authorities also realize this and factor it into their action.

The Security Council must continue to closely follow the situation in Myanmar and to speak with a unified and clear voice with regard to its expectations from the Burmese authorities on the basis of a timetable. Additionally, Belgium hopes that the General Assembly's draft resolution on renewing Mr. Gambari's good offices mission will enjoy the broadest possible support. My delegation is also attentively awaiting Special Rapporteur Pinheiro's report to the Human Rights Council following his visit to the country.

In recent weeks, the European Union has adopted targeted restrictive measures. The European Union has also indicated its readiness to review those measures in the light of developments on the ground and the results of the good offices mission. The European Union recently appointed its own Special Envoy, Mr. Piero Fassino. He will coordinate the action of the European Union in order to support the good offices of Mr. Gambari and the action of the United Nations vis-à-vis Myanmar, and to assist Myanmar on the path towards democracy, respect for human rights, reconciliation and prosperity.

Belgium pays tribute to the tireless efforts of the Special Adviser, Mr. Gambari, and his team. My delegation looks forward to Mr. Gambari's return to Myanmar in the near future and the prospects for an

agreement on a permanent presence of his team in the country.

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, I wish to thank Mr. Gambari for his briefing. I would also like to express my appreciation for Mr. Gambari's tireless facilitation efforts in addressing the Myanmar issue and the positive progress that has been achieved.

China believes that Mr. Gambari's recent visit has yielded positive results on many aspects, including the following: visiting Myanmar earlier than scheduled; engaging in candid dialogue with the Myanmar leadership and several ministers; meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi and with Minister Aung Kyi, the liaison officer for this political dialogue; the positive statement by Aung San Suu Kyi on the dialogue process; and Aung San Suu Kyi's contacts with Minister Aung Kyi and with the leadership of the National League for Democracy. Also, Mr. Gambari was invited to visit Myanmar again. Moreover, the Myanmar Government has agreed to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit the country and is now receiving Mr. Pinheiro, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar. All these positive signs show that the political process in Myanmar is on the right track and is moving in the right direction. We have noted that the Special Advisor was unable to meet the top leader of Myanmar, which gave rise to various speculations by the media. However, in our view, the benchmarks for evaluating whether the visit was a success or not should not rest on whom he met or where he has been. The judgement should be based on whether the good offices can move the overall situation of Myanmar forward in a positive direction. By this standard, Mr. Gambari's visit was, indeed, a success.

As mentioned by Mr. Gambari on many occasions, the issue of Myanmar cannot be resolved overnight and the Secretary-General's good offices are a process. While putting full confidence in the good offices, the international community should also show due patience for the process and results of those efforts. Rome was not built in a day. Myanmar is faced with various kinds of complex problems, and an appropriate and comprehensive settlement will, inevitably, take some time. The Secretary-General's good offices also need to be carried out in an incremental, step-by-step manner, with gradual results.

By inviting Mr. Gambari for another visit, Myanmar has shown its willingness to continue its contacts and cooperation with the United Nations. We encourage Mr. Gambari to further enhance mutual trust, to continue his candid dialogue with Myanmar and to put forward feasible policy and technical recommendations based on the national conditions of the country and provide facilitation and assistance for the political dialogue process. China also calls on the United Nations to focus its attention on how to help Myanmar develop its economy and improve the livelihood of its people.

The international community should make positive efforts to compliment the Secretary-General's good offices and provide constructive approaches for the settlement of the Myanmar issue. In essence, the Myanmar issue is an internal affair of the country and does not pose any threat to international or regional peace and security. The situation in Myanmar is gradually calming down and turning for the better. People's lives are coming back to normal. This is the common wish of every nation that sincerely wants to help Myanmar. The international community should welcome the current good momentum and push for further improvement of the situation.

Sanctions will not help resolve the issue, but rather further complicate the situation. Sanctions will even undermine the dialogue and the reconciliation process that is starting and interrupt the existing contacts on cooperation between Myanmar and the United Nations. This is the last thing that China, and all other countries in the region, wishes to see. The international community should create a relaxing, external environment for the dialogue process and encourage the Myanmar Government to continue its cooperation with the United Nations. It should also provide assistance to the country in its economic and social development. The comprehensive solution of the Myanmar issue relies mainly on the efforts of the Government and people of Myanmar through inclusive dialogue and full consultation.

In our view, the Myanmar issue mainly has three aspects. Firstly, the Myanmar Government needs to see how to improve the lives of its people and achieve comprehensive economic and social development. Secondly, it also needs to decide how to promote ethnic harmony and ensure that the fruits of development are shared by all. Thirdly, it needs to consider how it can

expand political participation and promote democracy and the rule of law.

We sincerely hope — and believe — that through dialogue the Myanmar Government will listen carefully to the views of all parties and take further steps to address each and every issue relating to ordinary people's lives, to the rights and interests of ethnic groups and to democratization. We also hope that all parties to the dialogue can give top priority to maintaining national unity and stability and to promoting long-term development, which is in the overall interest of the country. We hope that mutual trust will be built, common ground will be expanded and a positive and flexible approach will be taken to push for more positive and tangible results from the dialogue.

China supports the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in playing a constructive role in the Myanmar issue. Stability and development in Myanmar are in the interest of all countries in South-East Asia. We hope that ASEAN countries will continue to help Myanmar as a family member and work together for harmonious development in the region.

China also welcomes the assistance offered to Myanmar by other countries through bilateral channels. We keep our minds open to all constructive ideas that may help properly resolve the Myanmar issue. At the same time, all assistance by the international community, no matter in what form, should obtain the understanding and cooperation from the Myanmar Government and people.

As a friendly neighbour of Myanmar, China has followed the Myanmar situation very closely. We sincerely hope Myanmar will return to stability, make progress in development and achieve political democracy and national harmony at an early date. We do not want to see a relapse into turbulence in the country. China will continue, in its own way, to support the Secretary-General's good offices and to help the Myanmar Government and people properly address the problems they are now facing. We are also ready to work with other members of the international community.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): I also would like to thank Mr. Gambari for his briefing and would like to welcome the determination he shows, as well as the personal determination of our Secretary-

General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, who really continues to try to move things forward in Burma. The statement by Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi, read by the Special Envoy, and the possibility given the Nobel Peace Prize winner to meet leaders of the National League for Democracy, on the one hand, and Minister Aung Kyi, on the other, are steps in the right direction. These are modest but significant steps. For the first time in a long time, we are now able to see the possibility of real dialogue between the Government and democratic forces with the active support of the United Nations.

Thanks to the growing mobilization of the international community, the Burmese authorities seem to understand better and better that the return to the situation as it was before is no longer an option. I would like to stress the irreplaceable role of the countries in the region, and particularly the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), but also China in this development.

We must continue to work together towards common goals, which include an inclusive political dialogue, national reconciliation, the respect for human rights and the transition towards democracy. It is in this vein that the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, Mr. Bernard Kouchner, recently visited several countries in the region, notably Singapore and Thailand, which have an essential role to play here.

What we see, however, at the moment, is only a timid first step and it remains to be confirmed. We are still a long way away from, and this has been stated by several speakers, the expectations expressed by our Security Council on 11 October, when the Council asked for the Myanmar authorities to cooperate fully with Mr. Gambari in the execution of his mission. The Special Envoy met a number of obstacles during that particular visit.

The absence of significant gestures in relation to political prisoners, for example, and those detained following the demonstrations constitutes for us a source of serious concern. The arrests continue and we have just learned, with consternation, of the arrest last night of one of the young figures of the democracy movement, Ms. Suu Suu Nwe. We are still awaiting replies to questions about those who have disappeared during the repression of the democratic movement. We hope that the visit of Mr. Pinheiro, to which France attaches a great deal of importance, will enable us to make quick and rapid progress on this subject.

It is essential that we remain vigilant and mobilized. Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi has shown her preparedness towards dialogue without any ambiguity. The ball is now in the court of the regime. They must respond to this offer by engaging in dialogue without conditions and, by lifting, without delay, the restrictions placed on her. She must be able to consult with the leaders of political parties, ethnic groups and civil society as much as she feels is necessary. The current discussions are not an end in themselves. They must lead quickly to a high-level dialogue, which, to use Aung San Suu Kyi's own words, must be serious and must be tied to a timetable. This process must bring on board all political forces that are represented in the country, as well as ethnic groups.

France has taken steps to strengthen the European Union's sanctions on Burma. Those targeted measures send a strong message to Burmese leaders without affecting the population, which is already suffering from the situation and living in precarious conditions. However, we believe that the international community must be prepared to react positively if genuine political dialogue begins in Burma. For France, the essential criterion is the beginning of genuine negotiations between the military and the opposition, once the latter is free to move about and speak freely.

The European Union has set the example by being prepared to review, or even lift, its targeted sanctions if true progress is made. It has also designated Mr. Fassino as special envoy. It would be useful if he were able to consult with Mr. Gambari and Mr. Pinheiro as soon as possible, in order that they can mutually reinforce their efforts.

Another approach under the aegis of the United Nations could perhaps entail the establishment of a trust fund for humanitarian and development projects. In that vein, France would favour the establishment of an informal group of friends to support the mission of the Special Envoy. That group could channel the support of the international community to Mr. Gambari. In time, it could also ensure the international community's follow-up to the reconciliation process that we expect will take place. Similarly, if approved, the establishment of a permanent liaison office would also constitute significant progress.

Following the tragic repression of the democratic movement, there is now a ray of hope for the Burmese people. It is up to them to nourish that hope with an

eye towards the future; but they need our active support to do so. It is therefore now up to us not to let up on our efforts — to the contrary, now is the time for us to intensify our efforts towards national reconciliation and democratic transition, so as to emerge from the current crisis and move ahead. In that connection, it is crucial that Mr. Gambari return to Myanmar soon and that he convince the Burmese authorities to genuinely cooperate with him in order for him to make tangible progress. He has our resolute ongoing support in that endeavour.

Mr. Mantovani (Italy): At the outset, I would like to express our great appreciation for the strenuous efforts made by Mr. Gambari in moving forward the good offices mandate of the United Nations. His briefing confirms the value of the challenging diplomatic process that he is conducting through his visits and talks. Last month, we referred to a window of opportunity that was opening for Myanmar. We are convinced that that window is indeed still open, due first and foremost to Mr. Gambari's wisdom and patience. It is encouraging to observe that the membership at large remains united in support of Mr. Gambari's mission. Once again, it will be crucial for the Security Council to seek his advice when considering how to deal with the situation in Myanmar.

In that regard, we are convinced that the Council's sustained attention has been, and remains, instrumental to the achievement of our common goals. At this stage, it is essential to take stock of the implementation of the requests made by the Council in its presidential statement of 11 October (S/PRST/2007/37).

Having listened to today's briefing, we believe that that implementation has not achieved all its objectives — and therefore is not completely satisfactory. I refer in particular to the limited access granted to Mr. Gambari during his latest visit and to the measures taken against the United Nations Resident Coordinator, which are not consistent with the stated commitment of the Myanmar authorities to cooperate fully with the United Nations.

It is certainly not our intention to underestimate the positive steps taken in recent days by the Myanmar authorities. As mentioned by Mr. Gambari, a path to constructive dialogue has been opened. Myanmar authorities remain committed to receive further visits and are considering the establishment of an in-country

United Nations presence. Aung San Suu Kyi has been allowed, for the first time in years, to meet with a Government representative and with members of the National League for Democracy's Central Executive Committee, as well as to release a public statement through Mr. Gambari, which is the clearest proof of her readiness to embrace a constructive dialogue on the democratic future of the country. However, those positive developments are still coupled with elements of concern that require further progress. The rejection of the trilateral dialogue mechanism proposed by Mr. Gambari shows that the Myanmar authorities are still reluctant to engage without preconditions in a credible, comprehensive and inclusive national reconciliation process.

Thousands of political detainees are still imprisoned. Arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearances continue to be reported. We hope that the current visit by United Nations Special Rapporteur Pinheiro, which is in itself a positive development, will not be subject to any restrictions and will create the conditions for substantive and immediate progress in that regard. Positive answers are required to the whole set of concerns expressed by the Human Rights Council and the Security Council.

The international community as a whole is increasingly recognizing that national reconciliation is the only viable recipe for peace and development in Myanmar. We praise the efforts by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other neighbours of Myanmar to positively influence that process by conveying clear messages to the Myanmar authorities. Further engagement by regional players is still required, as an integral and essential element of any sustainable solution to the current problems.

Last week, the Italian authorities expressed these views to them at all levels, including through specific visits to the region. In fact, in Italy, the call of the people of Myanmar for peace, democracy and freedom continues to be at the top of the concerns of the Government, the Parliament, civil society and public opinion at large. There is no loss of focus or decrease in attention.

Italy welcomes with deep satisfaction the appointment of Mr. Piero Fassino as European Union (EU) special envoy for Myanmar. The primary objective of the special envoy's mandate is to support the United Nations and Mr. Gambari in the

implementation of the good offices missions. All his efforts will be in that direction. We are convinced that this appointment will be essential to allow the EU to speak with one voice and to reaffirm the importance that all EU countries attach to development, democratic transition and respect for human rights in Myanmar. The EU looks forward with particular interest to the outcome of Mr. Gambari's efforts, as they are the major yardstick to review the restrictive measures adopted last month to target those responsible for the violent crackdown and the political stalemate in Myanmar.

Let me conclude by expressing the view that, at this crucial stage, we should not open a divisive debate on whether the glass is half empty or half full. Rather, we should identify the most effective way to support Mr. Gambari in his efforts to fill the glass completely, as the people of Myanmar are asking for nothing less than that.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, for his comprehensive briefing on his latest visit to Myanmar. We thank him for his considerable efforts to carry out the good offices mission of the Secretary-General. We view as hopeful the results of the Special Envoy's visit during which the leadership of Myanmar demonstrated its readiness to cooperate with the international community. We believe the conclusions he has drawn from that visit to be balanced and justified.

We take note of the steps taken by Nay Pyi Taw to bring the situation back to normal, establish dialogue with the opposition and prepare for democratic change. Those too are positive developments. In that regard, we appreciate in particular the Government's decision to establish a special commission to draw up a draft constitution. We think it an especially significant development that Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the opposition, has been given an opportunity to address the international community and to meet with members of the National League for Democracy. We hope that Aung San Suu Kyi's readiness for dialogue and cooperation with the authorities will speed up the process of national reconciliation.

While noting those positive changes, we nevertheless expect the Myanmar leadership to take further steps to implement the seven-point road map to

democratic changes leading to a civilian form of Government.

In that respect, the international community, through the United Nations and regional organizations, must provide Myanmar with the necessary assistance in implementing that process. We await with interest the forthcoming Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit and hope that the other States of the region will pursue their efforts in support of establishing peace, stability and democracy in Myanmar. We are convinced that threats, pressure and sanctions exerted from outside the country are counterproductive and will only hinder the effort to solve the problems facing the country today.

We wish Mr. Gambari every success as he pursues his mission.

Mr. Arias (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to thank Mr. Gambari for his work during his most recent visit to Myanmar and above all for the way in which he has performed his tasks.

Panama welcomes the presence at this meeting of the representative of Myanmar and is pleased that we also shall be hearing from the representative of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. We would have preferred, however, that both delegations had made their statements prior to the members of the Security Council.

Panama notes enthusiastically the successes registered by Mr. Gambari during his most recent visit to Myanmar. We also note in a particularly positive vein the invitation extended to the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Mr. Pinheiro, to visit that country. We trust that the Human Rights Council will welcome his report upon his return.

We also note with concern the lack of progress in certain aspects of the Myanmar dialogue. In that regard, we feel that the failure to free political prisoners and the ongoing detainment of Aung San Suu Kyi are serious obstacles in the way of political progress in Myanmar.

Finally, we urge all nations — particularly those that, because of their geographic or cultural links, are closer and have better access to Myanmar — to leave no stone unturned in their efforts to pursue a satisfactory outcome in the political process under way. It would be most unfortunate if the protection of

human rights in Myanmar, rather than move forward, were to regress to its previous status.

Mr. Voto-Bernales (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I thank Mr. Ibrahim Gambari for the information he has provided with regard to his recent visits to Myanmar and to some concerned Asian countries. We are happy to hear that some progress has been made in the agenda agreed by the parties in order to seek true national reconciliation, ensure respect for human rights, and prepare for a transition to democracy.

We also welcome the invitation extended to the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Mr. Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, who is visiting the country from 11 to 15 of this month. We regret, however, the request made by the Government that the United Nations Resident Coordinator be withdrawn from that country.

Since the most recent crisis in October, and despite the fact that the authorities have reduced their military presence on the street and restored some fundamental freedoms, we continue to hear reports of violations of human rights and acts of repression against the political opposition and ethnic minorities. Although the Government's appointment of Minister Aung Kyi to coordinate dialogue between the authorities and the opposition is a useful decision, it is not sustainable for leaders of the opposition, such as Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, to remain under house arrest.

Peru stresses that it is urgent for the Government to free all political prisoners, including those arrested during the recent demonstrations, and to take the necessary action to launch a genuine national dialogue. We also feel it important for the Government of Myanmar to take all necessary measures to address economic and humanitarian issues of concern to the population.

The increasing number of displaced and refugees is leading to a situation of instability that could threaten stability within the country and the region. In that context, Peru wishes to highlight the urgency of providing inclusive cooperation and dialogue as the only way to launch political changes that will lead to national reconciliation and economic changes conducive to stability and progress in the country. In the context of that task, it is very important that Myanmar's neighbours, the countries of South Asia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the

international community continue to participate and cooperate.

Finally, now that we apparently have an opportunity to begin a process of positive change in Myanmar, the United Nations good offices are more necessary than ever before. We therefore support Mr. Gambari most firmly. His task is an especially delicate one, given the complexity of the situation in the country. We continue to await the future steps that may be taken by the Government of Myanmar to demonstrate its commitment to genuine national reconciliation.

Mr. Okio (Congo) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks you, Sir, for having organized this meeting on the situation in Myanmar. We also thank Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, for his most enlightening briefing.

In that briefing, he informed us that the Secretary-General's good offices mission to Myanmar is beginning to produce positive results. We note with satisfaction the progress that has been made, particularly the lifting of the curfew, the withdrawal of the military presence from the streets, and the opportunities for action enjoyed by the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, who was able to have fruitful meetings with the various actors in the crisis in Myanmar, particularly the Prime Minister and Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi, although the progress achieved is not yet sufficient, particularly from the Government's side.

As for the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Mr. Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, his report gives us an even clearer picture of the human rights situation in that country. While she is still working in very straitened circumstances, Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi has been able to meet with members of her party and with representatives of the authorities, particularly the Labour Minister, who has been appointed to act as liaison with her.

My delegation hopes, despite everything that Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi will soon be free, along with all the other political prisoners. We note her statement of optimism about the prospects for national reconciliation and that she is prepared to cooperate with the junta in power. In my delegation's view, in the light of such progress — limited as it may be — we should continue to encourage a patient process of dialogue with the junta in power and Myanmar society

as a whole if national reconciliation is to be achieved in accordance with the road map as a step towards the gradual establishment of democracy in the country. It is in that spirit that we supported and adopted the presidential statement of 11 October (S/PRST/2007/37), which was very encouraging as far as Mr. Gambari's mission is concerned.

Congo, given the results that have already been achieved and the hope they give rise to, recommends that, in the spirit of reconciliation and conciliation, the good offices mission of the Secretary-General continue, conducted by Mr. Gambari, who was invited by the authorities of Myanmar to return. We welcome the efforts by the countries working to facilitate Mr. Gambari's mission. We also welcome the support of the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, in particular in convincing the authorities in Myanmar to make progress.

My delegation is, however, aware that the situation is still an issue of concern and must be patiently followed. We note the expulsion from the country of the head of the United Nations team in Myanmar, the human rights situation, the situation of political prisoners and the need to improve the living conditions of the people of Myanmar. In that way and in a spirit of openness and dialogue that must be inclusive and based on a precise timetable, Myanmar will finally be at peace.

Mr. Christian (Ghana): Ghana would like to join other members of the Council in thanking the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Myanmar, Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari, for his briefing, which has highlighted some very significant and general positive developments in the country. In the same breath, we wish to commend the Secretary-General for his active support of the process of democratization in Myanmar, especially the leadership he has shown during the current crisis.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other key players in the region, both for the principled position they have taken in response to recent developments and, more importantly, for lending the Special Adviser much critical support in his interventions in Myanmar.

Ghana welcomes the recent moves by the authorities in Myanmar to reduce tensions in the country. We are pleased with the cooperation extended to Mr. Gambari in his efforts to bridge the gap between

the Government and the opposition. That underscores the fact that the Government and people of Myanmar are ultimately the masters of their own destiny.

However, we note from the report of the Special Adviser that serious concerns remain about ongoing reports of human rights abuses. Moreover, the Government has not provided any assurances on lifting the restrictions on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, neither is there an indication of the commencement of dialogue nor of the proposed time frame for the next step in the political road map. We therefore call on the Government of Myanmar to embark on a purposeful track of dialogue with opposition groups. That will mean carrying out the aforementioned measures and others mentioned in the report of the Special Adviser. The Government must create the enabling conditions for national reconciliation and continue along the path that will bring about peace and genuine democracy in Myanmar.

We must also stress the unity of this Council. Its support for the Human Rights Council has been decisive, and we call on the Government of Myanmar to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Mr. Pinheiro, during his visits to the country for the sake of the well-being of the people of Myanmar.

Ghana reiterates its full support for the Special Adviser, whose tireless efforts are now yielding tangible results. We hope that everything will be done to sustain the new momentum for peace in Myanmar.

Mr. Al-Qahtani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to start by warmly welcoming Mr. Gambari here to New York as the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General for Myanmar. We thank him for his positive statement, which always offers optimism. I would also like to thank him for the wisdom and foresight with which he considers the situation in Myanmar in that report.

It is very encouraging to see that the Special Adviser has been able to meet with high-level political officials in Myanmar and with the political parties, and that that Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights has been able to visit Myanmar for the first time in more than four years. It is also encouraging that the head of the opposition has been able to meet with members of her own party.

Although the situation in Myanmar is worrisome and bleak, those positive changes do give us hope, and we are confident that very soon important and inclusive dialogue will take place in a time-bound way between all of the various parties.

A few days ago, the Security Council had an important high-level meeting on the role of regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. There is no doubt that the crisis in Myanmar is a real example to be followed in giving flesh to our political statements and implementing them. We need to reinforce the part being played by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations countries in settling the crisis.

The work of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General in re-establishing constructive dialogue in Myanmar in order to bring together the political parties and the Government authorities is of primary importance. We need to establish a favourable climate that will encourage dialogue between all parties, and we reaffirm our support for the Special Adviser in his efforts to help Myanmar through the crisis. We also support the good offices of the Secretary-General.

We reiterate that the situation in Myanmar requires time and consistency by all parties, including the Government, which must redouble its efforts and set up a road map towards national reconciliation and release political prisoners. The members of the Security Council must do everything possible to avoid taking overly hasty decisions that would hinder the work of Mr. Gambari and the specialized and regional agencies in their efforts to continue their work.

The President: I will now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Indonesia.

Allow me to first join the previous speakers in thanking Mr. Gambari for his briefing. We commend his efforts to engage the leadership of Myanmar in addressing the complex and multifaceted challenges faced by the country.

The decisions by the Government of Myanmar to permit Mr. Gambari's visit earlier this month and to invite his return in few weeks are encouraging. We also recognize the significance of the decision by the Government to allow the visit by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Mr. Pinheiro.

We welcome the appointment of Minister Aung Kyi as liaison minister, his early contacts with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the decision by the Government of Myanmar to allow Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to meet key members of her National League for Democracy Party. We encourage the Government to further remove the restrictions on Daw Aung Suu Kyi as part of the effort to create conditions conducive to dialogue and reconciliation.

We equally welcome the readiness of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to cooperate with the Government of Myanmar to make this process of dialogue a success, as stated in her written statement, delivered by Mr. Gambari on 8 November 2007.

All of those developments represent the good faith of both parties, which is indispensable for a meaningful substantive dialogue to take place. It is our firm view that all parties concerned should make best use of this momentum to move ahead with the process to promote national reconciliation in an all-inclusive manner.

Indonesia appreciates the acknowledgement of the important role of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in supporting the good offices of the Secretary-General. In this regard, we wish to recall the statement of ASEAN Ministers of 27 September 2007, in which the Ministers, inter alia, urged the authorities of Myanmar to resume national reconciliation with all parties, working towards peaceful transition to democracy, and to release all political detainees, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The forthcoming ASEAN Summit in Singapore this month will witness the signing of an ASEAN Charter, which embodies the vision of an ASEAN community, bound together by shared values that include democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. We believe that each and every ASEAN member country has the responsibility to honour the values shared by the group.

Moving forward, it is essential that the Security Council continues to speak in one voice to consistently support the Secretary-General's good offices, including the mission carried out by Mr. Gambari.

On the part of Myanmar itself, we again urge the Government to take further tangible steps for a genuine and inclusive dialogue. This would be a key instrument for achieving national reconciliation, which would

constitute a foundation for Myanmar to move forward with its peaceful transition towards democracy.

On our part, it is Indonesia's strong commitment to continue to encourage Myanmar, bilaterally and within ASEAN, to address the challenges it faces in attaining such a noble goal. We urge the Government to continue to cooperate fully with Special Envoy Gambari and other United Nations mechanisms.

In conclusion, we wish to reiterate our firm support for the good offices of the Secretary-General, which emphasize the comprehensive engagement of the United Nations with Myanmar.

I shall now resume my functions as President of the Security Council. I shall now call on the representatives of Myanmar.

Mr. Swe (Myanmar): Mr. President, I wish to thank you for this opportunity to speak before the Security Council. I am particularly happy to see Indonesia, a fellow member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), presiding over this meeting. I understand that I will be followed by my colleague, the Permanent Representative of Singapore, who will speak in his national capacity. I also understand that the Permanent Representative of Japan, another country from our region, will be taking the floor.

I wish to thank Special Envoy Gambari for his briefing. His vast experience and consummate diplomatic skills have stood him well in carrying out the good offices role of the Secretary-General mandated by the General Assembly. It is noteworthy that, during his visit, he had the opportunity to meet with the Prime Minister, General Thein Sein, and several relevant Ministers. He also met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and representatives of ethnic nationalities, senior monks, political parties and civil society. I congratulate him on the fruitful outcome of his mission. His accomplishment is all the more commendable in view of the unwarranted pressure on the part of some quarters to unduly hasten his visit to Myanmar. This created a less than favourable environment for him to carry out his good offices mandate. However, he managed to overcome the challenge.

Allow me, Sir, to highlight the notable developments in Myanmar since Ambassador Gambari's recent visits, although he has touched on

most of them. Peace and stability have been restored in Myanmar, and life has returned to normal all over the country. The curfew has been lifted in toto, and there are no further arrests in connection with the demonstrations. Almost all those detained in connection with the September unrest have been released. As of 7 November, the number stood at 2,836. Only 91 now remain in custody. They have been found to have been involved in unlawful activities, including conspiracy to commit acts of terrorism. Action is being taken against them in accordance with the law. Ambassador Gambari has also informed the Council of this.

A 54-member committee has been constituted to draft a new constitution. A Minister was appointed on 8 October to liaise with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The appointment was welcomed by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in the statement issued by Ambassador Gambari on her behalf on 8 November in Singapore. She also confirmed that the first meeting between her and that Minister on 25 October 2007 was constructive. She has stated that, in the interest of the nation, she stands ready to cooperate with the Government in order to make the process of dialogue a success.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi met with the senior members of her party on 9 November 2007. Following the meeting, the spokesman of the National League for Democracy issued a statement saying that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi believed that the Government "was serious and really willing to work for national reconciliation". A United Nations press release issued on 7 November 2007 affirmed that

"the Prime Minister reiterated his Government's full support for Mr. Gambari's efforts on behalf of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and invited him to return to Myanmar in continuation of the good offices process".

This is in line with Myanmar's longstanding position of cooperation with the United Nations, a cornerstone of Myanmar's foreign policy.

We are cooperating not only with the Secretary-General and Ambassador Gambari in connection with the good offices role mandated by the General Assembly, but also with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Professor Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, who is currently in my country. He is receiving the full cooperation of my Government.

It is disappointing that, notwithstanding the positive developments, some continue to express scepticism with regard to the commitment of the leadership and the pace of the ongoing process. It must be noted that the challenges facing Myanmar are complex and delicate. We are promoting national unity and, at the same time, a national reconciliation process, and we are also laying the firm foundation for an enduring democracy.

Ambassador Gambari himself has mentioned, time and again, that the good offices role of the Secretary-General is a process and not an event. It must also be acknowledged, as confirmed by Ambassador Gambari in his statement this afternoon, that there is significant progress in Myanmar. The meetings between the Minister for Relations, U Aung Kyi, and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi have got off to a good start, and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi herself is optimistic about the process. Today, the nation can look forward with high expectations to the birth of a new era. Both parties to the national reconciliation process have expressed satisfaction with the ongoing dialogue. This is a time for encouragement and not for undue outside pressure. The good offices role mandated by the General Assembly should be allowed to play its catalytic role in facilitating the national reconciliation process. The Council should provide encouragement and refrain from taking any action at this critical juncture.

We thank the members of the Council who see things as they are and welcome the positive developments. We appreciate that.

There are situations in the world that threaten international peace and security and deserve the undivided attention of the Council. The situation in Myanmar is certainly not among them. Myanmar does not pose any threat to regional or international peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Singapore.

Mr. Menon (Singapore): I would like to thank Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari for his briefing.

Singapore is currently the Chairman of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). We are, however, making this statement in our national capacity.

At the last meeting of the Security Council to discuss the situation in Myanmar, my delegation had referred to the efforts of the United Nations, as embodied by Mr. Gambari, as unique and irreplaceable. This description remains valid. Mr. Gambari continues to have the most critical quality for the role he is playing, and that is the trust of both the Myanmar Government and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Both parties see value in his continued engagement. To date, no one has done better than Mr. Gambari.

The situation in Myanmar is extraordinarily complex and Mr. Gambari's report only confirms that. There are mixed signals. On the one hand, there continue to be reports of arbitrary arrests in Myanmar and we remain very concerned. We call for the release of those detained during the recent protests, as well as previously detained political prisoners.

We are disappointed by the Myanmar Government's decision to end the assignment of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Coordinator Charles Petrie. Mr. Petrie and UNDP, along with other United Nations agencies, have consistently tried to help improve socio-economic conditions in Myanmar. That move by the Myanmar Government sends the wrong signal about its commitment and willingness to work on those crucial issues with the United Nations.

But there have also been positive indications coming from Myanmar, which we should not dismiss. It is a positive sign that the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar, Mr. Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, has been allowed to visit Myanmar after a four-year hiatus. Minister for Labour Aung Kyi has been appointed as the liaison person between Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the Myanmar Government. That is another positive step that hopefully sets the stage for serious discussions and a genuine dialogue.

While we are disappointed that Mr. Gambari did not meet Myanmar's head of State, Senior General Than Shwe, during his last visit to Myanmar, we are encouraged that Mr. Gambari had access to the rest of the Myanmar leadership, including Prime Minister Thein Sein and Myanmar's State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) Authoritative Team. Mr. Gambari also met Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, as well as other stakeholders, including members of the National League for Democracy (NLD), the National Unity Party and civic groups. We welcome the partial lifting

of political restrictions on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, which allowed her to meet fellow NLD officials on 9 November.

The most significant development was the statement of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, which Mr. Gambari delivered to the international community on her behalf on 8 November. That was the first time in a very long time that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's views had been heard by the outside world. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's statement underscored her commitment to discussions with the regime in order to achieve national reconciliation. She welcomed the appointment of the liaison person Minister Aung Kyi, described their first meeting as a constructive one and looked forward to further discussions. She stated her expectation for a meaningful and time bound dialogue with the SPDC leadership. She said that she stood ready to cooperate with the Government in order to make the process of dialogue a success. Most important, she welcomed the necessary good offices role of the United Nations.

Of course, it would have been much better had Daw Aung San Suu Kyi been released and allowed to deliver the remarks herself. In that regard, we hope that the Myanmar Government will release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi immediately and unconditionally so that she can participate fully in the process of political dialogue and national reconciliation.

Nevertheless, it is extremely significant that in her statement, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi expressed clear support for the current process and the good offices role of the United Nations. We are therefore encouraged that the Myanmar Government has invited Mr. Gambari back for another visit. We urge the Myanmar Government to continue to engage Mr. Gambari at the highest level and to grant him full access to all parties in Myanmar. National reconciliation will require commitment and dialogue at the highest level.

The Myanmar Government also needs to establish a meaningful, results-oriented and time bound political dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Such a process should be inclusive and involve all stakeholders, including the various ethnic groups. We are heartened by NLD spokesman Nyan Win's press statement of 9 November that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi believed the ruling authorities have the will for national reconciliation and that she intends to work with Minister Aung Kyi.

The international community should respect the views of Daw Aung San Sun Kyi and do what we can to support Mr. Gambari in his mission. We should not make an already complex mission more difficult by precipitate moves. The progress that Mr. Gambari has made so far is not insignificant. We have to recognize that a genuine political dialogue leading to national reconciliation is a long-term process. There are no quick fixes and we should not complicate the process by injecting unreasonable time lines or unrealistic expectations. What we can do is to support Mr. Gambari and encourage all the parties involved to engage in a meaningful dialogue. We would only be doing the Myanmar people and ourselves a major disservice if we were to prematurely give up on the United Nations good offices mission. Mr. Gambari continues to represent our best hope for progress. He should be invested with the requisite support, authority and prestige.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its regional partners fully support Mr. Gambari's efforts. Singapore's Foreign Minister, George Yeo, recently met his counterparts in China, Japan and India for informal consultations on how the region could support the national reconciliation process in Myanmar. Singapore's Prime Minister, Lee Hsien Loong, has invited Mr. Gambari to brief the leaders of the East Asia Summit in Singapore next week, on 21 November. That will be an important opportunity for Mr. Gambari to personally update and engage Summit leaders from ASEAN, China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia and New Zealand. This can only strengthen the Secretary-General's good offices mission. We look forward to welcoming Mr. Gambari to Singapore next week and to his participation in the EAS discussions on Myanmar.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I thank the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Myanmar, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, for his briefing on his most recent visit to Myanmar. Japan welcomes the positive outcome of Mr. Gambari's visit to Myanmar this time.

The statement issued by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, read out loud by Mr. Gambari on her behalf, is a clear indication of her willingness to engage in a meaningful and time bound dialogue with the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) leadership. On the other hand, the decision of the Government of Myanmar to allow Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to meet with the leaders of her party, the National League for Democracy, and the holding of the second meeting between Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Minister Aung Kyi on 9 November were positive moves by the Myanmar Government.

We owe much of those positive developments to the efforts of Mr. Gambari and believe that it is important to continue our support for the good offices of the Secretary-General and his Special Adviser.

It should be noted that Mr. Gambari could not meet some of the people he had wished to meet. Therefore, we strongly call on the Government of Myanmar to continue to cooperate fully with the United Nations and its mission and to engage with Special Adviser Gambari.

As was emphasized by the Special Adviser himself, the Secretary-General's good offices is a process and not an event. One mission by itself cannot solve everything. We therefore believe that it is all the more important for the international community to continue to act in concert and support such efforts. We strongly hope that the Government of Myanmar will take advantage of the opportunity to realize a genuine dialogue that includes all relevant parties, in order to achieve national reconciliation.

Japan is ready to act constructively, in close cooperation with the Secretary-General and his Special Adviser, as well as with other interested countries, particularly those of ASEAN and countries of the region, in order to improve the situation in Myanmar and to help solve the issues through dialogue between and among the parties concerned in Myanmar.

The President: There are no other speakers on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I should now like to invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussions on the subject.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.